Chemical Fragrances: Effects on the Autonomic Nervous System

by Terri Perry TFT DX MAR

Commercial laundry detergents and fabric conditioners, household cleaners, air fresheners, fragrant candles and personal toiletries – find alternatives, for your safety.

I specialize in treating anxiety, panic attacks, depression, trauma and phobias, using a method called Thought Field Therapy (TFT). However, during the treatment I find that many people are being adversely affected by chemical fragrances, perfumes, detergents, bleaches, etc. Many of these are central nervous system disruptors that cause behavioural changes.

We live in a toxic world, but I wonder, how many of you realize just how doing the everyday things, such as having a bath/shower, washing clothes and cleaning the toilet, with chemically fragranced products can affect you.

Problems that can be triggered or made worse by these products are:
- Headaches;
- Anxiety and some phobias;
- Panic attacks;
- Depression;
- Eczema and skin irritation;
- Multiple Chemical Sensitivity;
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder;
- Hormone disruption (including infertility).

As a TFT practitioner, I see clients suffering from many of the above, often after being given up on by the medical profession. Over 90% of the clients I see are being affected by chemical fragrances. I also notice that the increased toxic load is 'tipping people over the edge' into, not just physical but mental/emotional problems.

TFT (Thought Field Therapy)

Discovered and developed by Dr Roger Callahan PhD, a respected Clinical Psychologist with over 40 years of experience, TFT eliminates the root cause of negative emotions and trauma.

Dr Callahan also made an important discovery quite early in the development of his therapy, which is that although quite a high percentage of people benefited immediately from the treatment, others did not respond (this was quickly identified, as normally, we can expect a reduction or elimination of a client's problem in about 20 minutes). Dr Callahan discovered that a successful treatment was being blocked by the person inhaling detergent from their clothes or perfume/aftershave, which can result in a phenomenon called Psychological Reversal that stops any treatment from working. They were told to return home and wash off the offending products and return in clothes washed only in environmentally-friendly detergent. Once they had done this, the same treatment was repeated, and proved successful immediately. They no longer suffered their anxiety problems, etc.

We test for Individual Energy Toxins that can affect the thought field using Applied Kinesiology. These toxins can either be inhaled or ingested, affecting the body and mind.

We find that chemical fragrances can affect an individual in the following ways:
1. By causing Psychological Reversal – a complete polarity reversal, whilst being influenced by the toxin, preventing the body's ability to heal itself, regardless of the type of treatment carried out;
2. By increasing heart rate, increasing anxiety, over-stimulating the autonomic nervous system leading to hyper-anxious states: shaking, panicky feelings, etc, confirmed by an excessively raised Heart Rate Variability reading (see case studies);
3. By triggering or aggravating physical pain (inhaling toxic detergent from clothes or perfume).

Dr Callahan subsequently introduced advanced training for TFT practitioners to enable them to detect and treat these toxins which, in turn, resulted in higher success rates.

Heart Rate Variability

Heart Rate Variability (HRV) monitors the current heart rate and autonomic nervous system function. It has been shown to be a reliable indicator of overall health but also be a predictor of death. At one time it was believed that the rhythm of the heartbeat should be perfectly even. However, in 1965, Hon and Lee noted that foetal distress was associated with 'alterations in interbeat intervals before any appreciable change occurred in heart rate itself'(Callahan, 2000). In 1996, Sayers and others focused attention on the existence of physiological rhythms imbedded in the beat-to-beat heart rate signal.

Although the procedure to measure the variation in the intervals between heartbeats is called heart rate variability (HRV), it is not the heart rate itself that is being addressed, but rather the intervals between the heart beats. Research found that an even interval is a danger signal and a predictor of mortality. What
is desired is a form of chaos, which appears to be associated with information processing and health. The software involved in HRV is complex and derived from physics and electrophysiology. The HRV instrument yields a number of important indices and has become a marker for, among other things, the degree of balance or imbalance in the autonomic nervous system (Malik; Malik and Camm).

HRV started as a clinical and research tool for cardiologists. Fuller Royal, MD Medical Director of the Nevada Clinic in the USA describes HRV as follows:

"The Heart Rate Variability test gives an incredibly accurate view of the autonomic nervous system as well as the variability of the heart. What I found is that TFT, which I have been using, has a dramatic effect on the autonomic nervous system (ANS) in correcting disorders involved in the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system. It is extremely difficult to change the ANS because it is a stable characteristic. There is no placebo effect with the ANS. TFT has been for me a nice piece of the puzzle that's been missing as to how to enter and correct rapidly, defects in the ANS has been for me a nice piece of the ANS. It is a stable characteristic. Extremely difficult to change the ANS."

Research by Kawachi et al (1995) found that people with phobias had lower heart rate variability scores and therefore were more prone to heart problems.

In my practice I do a five minute pre and post-treatment HRV test. When we measure the HRV, the client is asked to tune in to their most severe problem or most disturbing thought whilst connected by an ear lobe sensor to the computer software. The measurement indicates to me how I should commence treatment - a very low reading may indicate checking for ingested toxins or depression; excessively high measurement - inhaled toxin such as perfumes or detergents and often hyper-anxiety. Following TFT treatment, the most disturbing thought loses all power to cause upset as the 'perturbation' has been removed from the thought field. The follow-up HRV shows dramatic physiological changes corresponding to the client's report of dramatic differences in how they feel.

A very low Heart Rate Variability reading, below 50, shows an increased risk of sudden death. Bilchick et al wrote in the American Journal of Cardiology that "each increase of ten milliseconds in SDNN conferred a 20% decrease in risk of mortality." TFT improves SDNN consistently. However, I believe that an excessively high reading could be just as detrimental as a low one, as the nervous system is in overdrive (more studies required).

A normal Heart Rate Variability reading for a healthy adult is around 100, but with those affected by chemical fragrances it often becomes excessively elevated, the highest reading I have seen is 375! The client was suffering dizziness, anxiety, trembling, reddened complexion and unable to stand. Another client, with a similar reading was extremely tearful and anxious, had developed a fear of going to town. In each case, I detected either laundry detergent, perfume or air freshener to be toxic to them; I treated them with Dr Callahan's 7-second treatment. After treatment of only the detected toxins, the clients reported being very much calmer, the reddened complexion lightened, and the anxiety disappeared, their HRV returned to a more normal level around 100. Once they totally eliminated the chemically fragranced clothes, air-fresheners, exposed to that particular perfume and continued to use natural detergent, they did not suffer further high levels of anxiety or unsteadiness. If they relapsed to their previous products, their problems returned.

Hyper-anxiety symptoms, panic attacks, nausea, headaches, dry cough, dizziness, nervousness and irrational fears, crying outbursts, obsessive or depressed mood, are often symptoms caused or aggravated by plug-in air-fresheners in the home, including potpourri, fragrant candles or joss sticks/incense burning. Similarly, bleach or cream bathroom cleaners can also affect certain people.

I quote, as follows, Dr Callahan's case of Steven, which is yet another example of the effects of toxic detergent.

"Steven had been chronically and severely depressed for seven years, and had been non-responsive to all chemical and psychotherapy treatments. He felt hopeless since none of the various treatments, drugs and psychotherapy he tried offered any help. After only a few minutes of TFT diagnosed treatment (Causal Diagnosis), Steven immediately reported that his long-term depression had vanished. My first diagnostic discovery in this instance was that his shirt tested toxic (due to a commonly toxic laundry soap), which, I have shown, can prevent any treatment from helping him. This condition (Psychological Reversal) could explain his total non-responsiveness to all previous attempts over the years to help him.

HRV was taken before and immediately after the brief treatment. As in common with TFT, all traces of depression were gone. The variability in the intervals between heartbeats, as measured with the HRV, immediately increased from a dangerous SDNN low of 32.2 to a very healthy SDNN of 144 immediately after my brief treatment. A
follow-up five years on showed that the depression did not recur."

Long-term depression can lower HRV, but this may also be because they are ingesting a certain toxic food substance, e.g. wheat, maize, corn and coffee are commonly associated with depression.

I have consistently noted that anxiety, depression, headaches and respiratory problems are often found in those using air fresheners around the house (plug-in, pump spray, aerosol or shop bought potpourri). When clients changed to the eco friendly laundry detergent, disposed of the air fresheners and opened windows they felt much better, and often recovered.

Personally, I inform all prospective clients over the telephone prior to the consultation that they are forbidden to wear ANYTHING perfumed on the day of the treatment, i.e. hair gel, hair spray, deodorant, perfume, aftershave, perfumed moisturizer, etc., and they are to shower using only plain water (no soap or shower gel). They are also to wash the clothes they plan to wear on the day in an environmentally friendly detergent.

I also believe sleeping in bed-linen washed in pungent detergents can be a cause of insomnia.

The effects of toxic bed-linen are demonstrated by one of my TFT colleague’s experiences:

A mother came to see him because her young son was suffering up to four panic attacks a day. He had angry behaviour problems and was threatened with exclusion from school. Their GP said that the only way forward was to put the child on drugs, but the mother did not want to do this as he was only six years old. My colleague advised her to immediately remove the bed clothes from her son’s bed and wash them in environmentally friendly, natural laundry liquid, dry them and get them back on his bed for that evening. She washed all his clothes as instructed and, the next day, to her amazement, her son did not have one panic attack that day. Two weeks later his behaviour was so much improved that the teachers at the school asked “what medication did the doctor put him on.” From that day he no longer suffered panic attacks. However, we know from experience that if people return to using these fragranced products, they start to experience a return of their previous symptoms, and it may even be the result of breathing in the air in the detergent aisle of the supermarket or the perfume counter at the department store. Avoid this area if you are asthmatic too. How many children and adults are on medication for the sake of these chemical fragrances?

Case Studies

Case 1

Mrs X, 37 years-old. Teacher and mother of two young children. She presented with panic attacks (could not go out with husband for dinner and often had to be driven home before they arrived); fear of vomiting when out; fear of not finding a toilet when out; panic when in a queue at Sainsbury’s, as well as panic attack on a previous flight and had to taken off the airplane.

Although this lady’s Heart Rate Variability readings were not excessive, toxins were a problem.

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Items found toxic:
- Ariel laundry detergent;
- Bleach (he bleached the kitchen sink daily using his bare hands!) His body smelled of bleach;
- PG Tips tea (he drank five cups each day);
- Lemonade (which he had been drinking every night);
- I also treated for 17 different traumas and fears;
- The pervading smell of his clothes (washed in Ariel) and the smell of bleach was so bad we had to open all the windows and doors for the rest of the day. Even down to washing the chair covers he had sat on!
- My partner who had been acting as a surrogate, standing beside this man, started to hyperventilate, felt unwell and was forced to go outside for fresh air. I took my partner’s Heart Rate Variability and it was up over 212 (normally around 70-100). This was proof, if any were needed, of how pungent detergents and cleaning products can affect the nervous system – even if you are not wearing the offending substances yourself, i.e. someone else’s perfume may cause a panic attack or asthma attack. Merely walking down the detergent aisle or scented candle area of a supermarket can cause similar reactions.

Case 2

Mr S, 69 years-old. He presented with high anxiety and bowel symptoms. ‘Stomach in knots.’ Had X-rays but results were negative. Panic attacks. Fear/anxiety about having meals out, and fearful of booking a holiday.

Pre-treatment Heart Rate Variability reading 208.5 with a pulse of 102.9!

This man had such high body toxicity it was almost impossible to test with Applied Kinesiology. It was necessary to call in my partner to use as a surrogate, in order to test.

Items found toxic:
- Bold 2 in1 laundry detergent;
- Finish dishwasher tablets;
- Simple soap;
- Calvin Klein perfume;
- Chewing gum (may be because of aspartame);
- McCleans toothpaste;
- Anaesthetic for root canal filling.

Following this session, and switching to Eco friendly laundry products, she reported that she has not had any panic attacks since, and referred her sister to me for treatment.

Case 3

Mrs J suffered nervousness and an unbalanced feeling crossing roads. She telephoned me in an anxious state following her admission to hospital due to sudden chest pains. Unfortunately, whilst in hospital, they changed her tablets for high blood pressure but omitted to tell her to stop taking the ones she had been taking for years! The results were quite serious. When she phoned me she had high pitched buzzing in her ears, could not get her breath and could not stand up as her legs felt like ‘jelly.’ She felt disorientated and had aches in arms going from left to right. I quickly gave her a Heart Rate Variability check, as I knew I had to work fast to get her out of this situation.

As I expected, her HRV measurement was very high 344 (the highest reading I had seen at the time, but since I have seen one at 375!) and her pulse, which was 72, was normally around 50.

The smell of air fresheners around the house made my throat sore as I began treating this lady.

Items found toxic:
- Bold laundry detergent;
- Lily of the Valley air freshener;
- Bathroom air freshener;
Pump action air freshener which pumped out citrus about every 20 minutes; Hovis bread.

She became much calmer, the noises in her ears virtually disappeared, she was able to stand and did not feel unbalanced. I took a follow-up HRV reading and it was down to a near normal 132 (down 216 points, and probably avoided any further serious problems). I advised her to change to Ecover laundry products and dispose of all the air fresheners in the house.

I analyzed 35 of my client cases to find that only two of them had not been affected by these substances. The majority of the psychological symptoms they were experiencing all correlated with the main brand detergents, air fresheners and personal products.

Chemical Toxins and Blood Pressure

I awoke one morning in February feeling very light-headed and unable to walk without feeling the room spinning. I had a sore throat from the previous evening. I had attended a class at the local college where the room in which we sat was in a brand new building with new carpets. There was a chemical smell in the room. There was also some kind of monitor on the wall that was showing a red light, which had been lit all evening. Sometimes the light comes on and the windows open immediately but, on this occasion, they did not!

I took my blood pressure, it was very low, 98/68 (my normal BP is 118/80). We tested with Applied Kinesiology for any foods/drinks taken the previous day, that may have been toxic, and also of the college building with new carpets. There was a chemical smell in the room. There was also some kind of monitor on the wall that was showing a red light, which had been lit all evening.

I treated with Dr Callahan’s 7-second treatment for these and then re-tested my blood pressure.

It was now 125/78 and close to normal (textbook BP is 120/80). The room stopped spinning and I was able to walk without clutching onto furniture. I had not taken any other action — only treated the toxins. I immediately felt better, and the light-headed feeling went away. The sore throat also improved, and I continued to use the TFT algorithm which helped alleviate it further.

On another occasion, we had been to a dinner party the previous night where the host had fragrant candles burning, as well as plug-in air fresheners in the house. I felt generally light-headed and unwell unfortunately on this occasion I did not take my blood pressure but instead took my HRV.

Heart Rate 104.7 (normally around 78); SDNN 154.1 (excessive)

After treatment I felt OK again.

Some Final Thoughts

When people start to suffer with psychological symptoms, often their first port of call is their GP who prescribes drugs: Prozac, Seroxat, etc. Could there be a link between this increasing problem and the amounts of drugs now sold, or am I just being cynical?

Convert your bathroom and kitchen to natural products and keep chemicals to a minimum in the home. Open the windows and wash with mild soap and water — it is enough. Stay away from chemicals and stay well!

References


About the Author

Terri Perry TFT DX MAR is an advanced practitioner in TFT, trained in Causal Diagnosis and Individual Energy Toxins. Terri is registered with the Register of Trauma Therapists and specializes in treatment of negative emotions and trauma. She is a member of the BCMA, ATFT and BTFTA, a qualified Reflexologist and Member of the Association of Reflexologists and a practitioner for Foresight Preconceptual Care. She is based in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Harley Street, London appointments are available by prior arrangement. She may be contacted via healthyu@tiscali.co.uk; www.mindbalance.co.uk

Further Information

Dr Callahan’s website www.tftrx.com; Association of Thought Field Therapy www.atft.org; British Thought Field Therapy Association www.thoughtfieldtherapy.co.uk
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